

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 HA-05 TRSE-00 AID-05 ICA-11 /059 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/RPP:JMO'GRADY:BT
APPROVED BY ARA/RPP:CEFINAN
ARA/AND:R.STEVEN
-----053878 271812Z /43

R 271450Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 162967

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, CI

SUBJECT: CHILE'S LABOR MINISTER VISITS U.S.

REF: A) STATE 160487 B) SANTIAGO 4561 C) SANTIAGO 4206

1. DURING VISIT TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON JUNE 19-21
CHILE'S LABOR MINISTER VASCO COSTA RAMIREZ HAD SEPARATE
MEETINGS WITH INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT THOMAS "TEDDY" GLEASON, UNDER SECRETARY OF
LABOR ROBERT BROWN, AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT
REPRESENTATIVES LEE, BOGGS, AND MCLELLAN, AND AIFLD'S
DOHERTY AND FRIEDMAN. COSTA HAD ASKED TO SEE SECRETARY
MARSHALL AND AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY.

2. THE MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE DOL IS REPORTED SEPARATELY
IN REFTTEL A. ALTHOUGH NO STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE
TOOK PART IN ANY OF THE MEETINGS, REPORTS OF PARTICIPANTS
INDICATE THEY FOLLOWED MORE OR LESS SAME LINE DESCRIBED
IN REFTTEL B. BASIC THRUST WAS THAT GOC'S ULTIMATE GOAL
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IS NORMALIZATION OF LABOR SITUATION AND COMPLETE RESTORA-
TION OF TRADE UNION FREEDOM, BUT THAT POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN CHILE MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE
THIS GOAL QUICKLY. THE NEED TO COMPLETE PROCESS OF
DEPOPOLITICIZING LABOR MOVEMENT, PARTICULARLY THE

ELIMINATION OF ALL TRACES OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE, MAKES

UNION ELECTIONS INADVISABLE AT THIS TIME. AT SAME TIME
PROGRESS TOWARD ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND THE CONTROL OF
INFLATION REQUIRE STABLE, CONTROLLED SYSTEM OF LABOR
RELATIONS. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WILL BE REINSTITUTED
SOMETIME IN 1979, WITH COMPULSORY ARBITRATION OF UNRE-
SOLVED ISSUES. AFTER TWO YEARS WORKERS WOULD BE GIVEN
RIGHT TO STRIKE, SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE LEGISLATIVE
SAFEGUARDS. ONLY AFTER MACHINERY FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAIN-
ING AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT IN PLACE AND FUNCTIONING
SATISFACTORILY WOULD TRADE UNION ELECTIONS BE HELD.

3. "OSTA PRAISED WORK OF AIFLD AND ITS CURRENT PROGRAM
DIRECTOR IN CHILE. HE FELT AIFLD SHARED SAME BASIC
PHILOSOPHY OF OPPOSITION TO COMMUNISM AND TRADE UNION
INDEPENDENCE FROM POLITICAL PARTY, CHURCH, OR OTHER
INFLUENCE. AIFLD IS WELCOME IN CHILE AND CAN MAKE A VERY
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF LABOR
MOVEMENT BY PREPARING MORE LABOR LEADERS IN TECHNIQUES
OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. COMMENT: COSTA'S INSISTENCE
ON NEED FOR MORE TIME TO COMPLETE PROCESS OF DEPOLITICIZA-
TION AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY WAS OBVIOUSLY A RESPONSE TO
AFL-CIO'S MAY 22 REQUEST TO PINOCHET FOR UNION ELECTIONS
AND THE REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON UNION ACTIVITIES WITHIN
A 6 MONTH PERIOD (REFTEL C). ACCORDING TO MCLELLAN, THIS
WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BUT NOT ARTICULATED, NOR DID
EITHER PARTY GIVE ANY INDICATION THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE
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TIMETABLES WERE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION. THIS WOULD APPEAR
TO PUT THEM ON A COLLISION COURSE. THE GOC'S RATIONALE
FOR GOING SLOW ON MEASURES TO RESTORE TRADE UNION RIGHTS
AFFECTING ECONOMIC STABILITY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE A MAJOR
STUMBLING BLOCK FOR AFL-CIO, BUT COSTA'S ARGUMENT THAT
ELECTIONS NOW WOULD FAVOR COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS
WAS VAGUE AND UNCONVINCING. MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IT
CAUSES AFL-CIO TO WONDER WHETHER GOC IS ACTING IN GOOD
FAITH OR MERELY ENGAGING IN TACTICAL MANEUVERS TO GAIN
TIME AND STAVE OFF POSSIBLE FUTURE BOYCOTT. ACTION
REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE REPORTING ON
COSTA'S IMPRESSIONS OF U.S. VISITS, ESPECIALLY WITH
GLEASON. GLEASON'S OWN ASSESSMENT IS THAT HE WAS "TOUGH"
WITH COSTA, BUT WE HAVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS, LABOR POLICY LINE, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE162967
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JMO\GRADY:BT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780266-0444
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780615/aaaaanbd.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4375e57e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 160487, 78 SANTIAGO 4561, 78 SANTIAGO 4206
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2191496
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHILE'S LABOR MINISTER VISITS U.S.
TAGS: ELAB, CI, US, (RAMIREZ, VASCO COSTA)
To: SANTIAGO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4375e57e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014